

Accident Fund.—The amounts credited at the Post-Office Savings-Bank on the 1st January, 1898, to the various companies are as follows: Westport Coal Company, £1,424 9s. 11d.; Westport-Cardiff, £44 9s. 2d.; Greymouth-Point Elizabeth, £136 9s.; Blackball Coal Company, £180 11s. 1d.; total, £1,785 19s. 2d.

Foreign Trade.—During the year 1897 the Westport Coal Company shipped 16,701 tons of coal to ports outside of New Zealand. This is an increase of 6,154 tons over the previous year's shipments.

The output for the year shows an increase of 25,960 tons over the preceding year, the total output being 430,960 tons.

I have, &c.,

R. TENNENT,

The Under-Secretary, Mines Department, Wellington.

Inspector of Mines.

No. 4.

Mr. JOHN HAYES, Acting Inspector of Mines, Dunedin, to the UNDER-SECRETARY for MINES.

SIR,— Office of Inspector of Mines (Southern District), Dunedin, 30th March, 1898.

In accordance with the requirements of section 67 of "Coal-mines Act, 1891," I have the honour to report on the mines visited since taking duty in April last as follows:—

Springfield Colliery, Springfield (The Springfield Coal- and Pottery-works Company, owners).—(10/8/97): The top seam is not now being worked. All coal comes from a lower seam, raised at a small new shaft at the pottery-works. The section is as follows: Coaly clay roof; top coal, 2ft. 6in.; parting, 4in.; bottom coal, 9in.; fireclay, say, about 4ft. thick. The workings are in very good order, and timbering is carefully done. Ventilation is quite satisfactory. Report-books kept up to date. A copy of the mine plan has been sent in since my visit. The whole of the clay and most of the coals raised at this mine are used at the brick- and pottery-works belonging to the same proprietors.

Canterbury Colliery, Sheffield (Austin Brothers, owners).—(10/8/97): Nine men are employed here, seven of whom are engaged in getting coal, the present output being about 14 tons per day. The mineral is carted to Sheffield Railway-station, about a mile and a quarter. If the proprietors had a light branch line to their pit no doubt a larger trade could be done. The seam, which lies with a dip of 1 in 3, yields 4ft. of coal, and has a thick parting, which is utilised for stowing (packing) the spaces between the roadways. The method of working here adopted insures little or no waste. Natural ventilation is relied on, and appears ample. I suggested an improvement in the method of distributing the air, which is necessary in the summer months. No copies of rules posted. Report-books and plans behind. Drew attention to provisions of the Act relating to these matters.

Homebush Colliery, Glentunnel (J. Deans, owner; T. Brown, manager).—(11/8/97): The coal here is 7ft. 6in. thick, with a shaly sandy-clay roof overlaid by thin coal. At the adit-level the dip is 1 in 3, but towards the outcrop it gets much steeper—say, 1 in 1½. This pit has been laid out on a good plan, and it will be possible to take out the remaining pillars with practically no loss of coal. The roof is fairly strong, the roadways of ample area and in good order, and the ventilation excellent. There is a good road (forming a main return airway) to the second outlet, and I strongly recommended the manager to keep this secure by leaving plenty of pillar coal for its support when taking out the main body of the pillars. There are seven men engaged getting coal. Report-books up to date. Survey made a few days prior to my visit. Copy of Act at mine-entrance.

St. Helen's Mine, Whitecliffs (H. Levick, owner).—(13/8/97): The pit, until recently worked by Mr. Levick, is now stopped, and the owner has taken up ground at which the Whitecliffs Coal Company formerly worked. A new tunnel has been driven intersecting two seams. Mr. Levick intends continuing this tunnel until the other seams in the series are cut. Very little coal-getting has been done in this tunnel as yet. No copies of general and special rules posted up. Report-book properly kept. Mr. Levick has had his workings recently surveyed. The pit is in very satisfactory order.

Hartley Mine, Whitecliffs (W. Leeming and Sons, owners).—(13/8/97): Leeming's old drive is now stopped, the coal at which he was working being practically exhausted. Another tunnel has been started at a grade of 1 in 3. When driven about a chain the seam was struck, and found to have a dip of 1 in 6. It is at this date 48 yards from the mouth, and when extended to 60 yards a connection is to be made with the air-shaft formerly used in conjunction with the old tunnel. A Tangye steam-pump is to be shortly put in position.

Wairiri Mine, Glenroy (Wairiri Coal Company, Limited, Christchurch, owners; A. Thompson, mine-manager).—(12/8/97): The old Glenroy Mine is owned by this company, but has been standing for about a year. A new mine has recently been started by an adit-tunnel (from the banks of the Wairiri Creek) driven across the overlying measures for 3½ chains, at which distance the coal is struck. An air-shaft has been sunk near the outcrop, and a connection established. Good ventilation has been thereby secured. The main headings on each side of the tunnel are now being driven, but are not far in. Thickness of seam, 6ft., with two dirt partings, which reduce the thickness of marketable coal to 5ft. 6in. This mine is about six miles from a railway. Sales will consequently be local for the most part.

Mount Somers (G. Park, owner).—(17/8/97): This pit is about eight miles and a half from Mount Somers Railway-station, and near the south branch of the Ashburton River. The seam is upwards of 30ft. thick, with a dip of about 1 in 8, and crops out in a creek. It is ordinarily quarried, the surface being sluiced off, for which purpose water is brought from the creek by 11 in. diameter iron pipes under a head of 60ft. Owing to the recent scarcity of water, underground mining has been resorted to temporarily. It is Mr. Park's intention to utilise water for sluicing